nature net

The NatureKenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org April 03

DDT

use in Kenya

(Dichloro-diphenyl trichloroethane)

DDT is dangerous to all living things, including people, and mosquitaes lang ago develaped resistance to DDT. But health afficials were recently advocating, in the press, spraying DDT as a measure against malaria.

DDT is also in use again, in many countries, for indoor spraying anly, as authorized by the World Health Organisation (WHO). However, the main problem with this, is that no control is possible.

More impartantly, there are many ather ways to contral mosquitoes effectively and salutions, old and new, are available.

One alternative is the use af a bacterium Bti (as the product is known), which occurs naturally and is used extensively in mosquito control in Eurape and North America.

Another is the use of mosquito nets over beds at night, especially bednets treated with insect repellent.

Research has also shown that the saurces of the masquita in the highlands, where most people have no or low natural immunity, are all man-made, which means that, in such situations, malaria can be dealt with very easily.

It is clear that malaria can no longer go unchecked, but not with DDT. For more on non DDT optians, please cantact the Head of Human Health Division at ICIPE, Dr. John Githure jgithure@icipe.org

EVENTS & MEETINGS

Kids' Birdwalk

Friday 11 April '03
4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Meet at the National Museum, Nairobi, just past the entrance gate. (In case of rain, meet at the front entrance of the Museum).

Open to children and friends of members aged 4 to 14. Adults must be accompanied by a child.

Please bring a pen or pencil. If possible, also bring 30 shillings for a soda; adults please bring your membership card for Museum entry; and binoculars if you have them.

East Africa Natural History Society
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mon 12 May '03,
5:00 p.m. Louis Leakey Hall
National Museums, Nairobi

For the Chairman's report on the past year's activities, a financial account and the election of Executive Committee members.

It will also be an opportunity for you to get insights into the work of the various Nature Kenya committees and projects and learn how you too can get hands-on involvement!

Proposals for nomination can be filed with a Nomination Form, available at the Nature Kenya office. Nomination Forms should be returned to the office at least 7 days before the AGM.

Fundamentals of Ornithology 2003

28 April to 5 May 03

The Fundamental of Ornithology Course gives you the appartunity to improve your bird identificatian techniques and learn mare abaut birds.

Individuals working as birdwatching safaris guides or resident naturalists and other birders are encouraged to apply. Teaching will be in English and applicants MUST have at least Form IV (or its equivalent) level of educatian.

This intensive residential course, costs only Ksh 25,000 per persan. This includes tuitian fees, caurse nates and basic writing material, full board accammodation at the EFSC hostels, one-off entry fees to Hell's Gate National Park and excursion and transpart during the period of the course.

And to apply? It's very simple. If you qualify, all you need is to pay half the fees (Ksh 12,500) and we will reserve a place for you. The balance should be paid before 16 April 2003. All payment should be made to 'Nature Kenya'.

This is your last chance as only a few places are left! Booking is on a first come, first served basis.

Should you need further information, write to The Coordinator, FoO course, Nature Kenya or call (02) 3749957/3746090/3749986 ar just email tba2@africaonline.co.ke

Bats: Are they *Scary and Spooky*

Paul Webala
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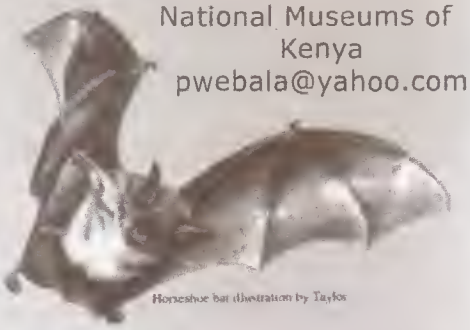


Horseshoe bat illustration by Taylor

Bats have often suffered the fate of being dropped into categories of spooky, scary or dangerous. Horror movies portray and use bats to elicit fear and communities worry about them as a health or safety concern. Much folklore around the world has cast the bat in a bad role. In modern times, bats are condemned for carrying rabies! In East Africa, this is exceedingly rare, and anyway bats do not attack people; in Europe, medieval witchcraft texts described the use of bats by witches and this association gave them their 'evil' reputation, which has clung to the modern day.

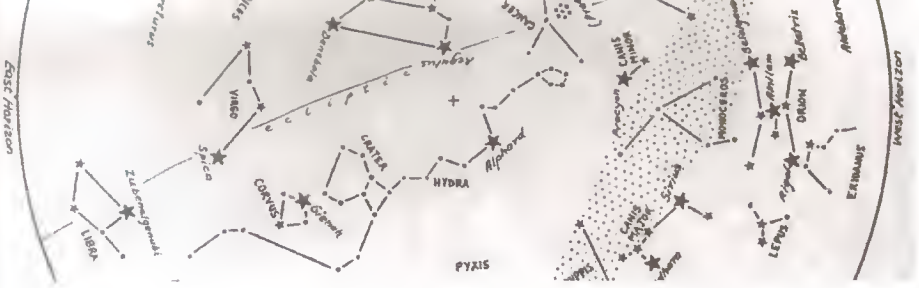
These perceptions have predictable and unnecessary results, such as widespread extermination and bat habitat destruction. As bats are mostly nocturnal animals, people are not familiar with these creatures, and often what is unfamiliar is misunderstood and their ecological importance is often overlooked.

Bats are vital, as the primary pollinators of certain plants, especially those that bloom nocturnally. Many species of plants would disappear without the bats' help, with obvious disastrous results for the environment.

In addition to their important contribution to pollination and plant seed dispersal, many species of bats help to keep the insect population in check. A common brown bat, for example, can eat as many as 600 mosquitoes in an hour. Bats are essential allies in nature's delicate system of checks and balances.

If you require more information on bats, their ecology and conservation, there are many useful links at Bat Conservation International's web site, www.batcon.org

Efforts to stop the misguided destruction of bat species are making notable progress, both in saving the bats and convincing people bats are not scary. *Can we convince you?*



April Sky, from The Safari Star Guide by Alex and Joy MacKay

EVENING SKY

By Ian MacKay and Fleur Ng'weno

Stars, April

The western sky still holds ORION, very low on the horizon now. Following it, to the south, is the constellation CANIS MAJOR, the big dog, with its brilliant star Sirius. Orion will not be seen again in the evening sky until late November.

The constellation LEO, the Lion, is overhead (near the bright planet Jupiter this year). A sickle-shaped group of stars forms the lion's head.

A little to the south of Leo, also high overhead, is the constellation HYDRA. Hydra is a long, winding line of stars, reaching across the sky from northwest to southeast. In the myths of ancient Greece, it was a water snake that came out of its lair occasionally to lay waste to the countryside; its destruction was one of the labours of the mighty Hercules.

Planets, April 03

Jupiter and Saturn are both high in the evening sky. There is a fair chance of seeing our innermost planet, Mercury, as the sun is setting. From our viewpoint on Earth, Mercury never moves far from the sun; it is normally not visible because of the sun's intense brightness.

In the morning, the planet Venus is bright above the dawn.

Moon, April 03

1 April *new moon*; 10 April *first quarter* (overhead at sunset); 16 April *full moon*; 23 April *last quarter* (rises at midnight).

Tassia & Il'ngwesi COMMUNITY LODGES
(Special low season rates)

Tuesday after Easter to 30th June
Tassia - US$260 per night for group of up to 18 persons, on self catering basis
Il'ngwesi - US$330 per night for group of up to 18 persons, on self catering basis

ROUTE UPDATE - BORANA TO TASSIA
A lot of work has recently been done on this exciting and interesting route through Mokogodo Forest to Tassia. This route must only be used by experienced 4WD drivers!

Please try and help these communities in their conservation efforts by encouraging people to book these community lodges. They depend upon income from these lodges.

Island Camp Lake Baringo
SPECIAL OFFER

Free Carafe of Wine with dinner each evening of your stay
Free Lake Cruise
Twin KShs.9,300.-
Single KShs.5,980.-
Children 2-12 yrs sharing dbl tent KShs.1,500.-

Valid from 1st April to 15th July 2003

For bookings contact
Joseph or Benjamin at
Let's Go Travel
ABC Place
PO BOX 60342 - 00200
Nairobi
Tel #: 4447151/4441030
Fax #: 4447270/4441690
Email: info@letsgosafari.com

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museums' Nairobi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the Natianal Museum, Nairobi car pork at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e. 20 April**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arbaretum on the second Saturday and lost Manday, i.e. **12 & 28 April from 9:30 a.m**. Meet at the Arboretum gate. *Those who are not members of FONA ar Nature Kenyo poy Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gote.*

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and oround Nairabi. Meet at the Natianal Museum car pork every Wednesday at 8:45 o.m. Return obout 12:30 p.m. *Those who are nat members can get temparary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable an arrival at the car park.*

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturdoy birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Farest Guides Assaciation is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **5 April, at 6:30 a.m**. from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person.

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends af Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, **but there is no walk in April.** Please call Marlene Reid on (011) 491 648 to confirm

Ngong Road Forest Walks (Nairobi)

The Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust Nature walks are held an the first and third Saturdays of the manth i.e. **5 & 19 April, at 9:00 a.m**. Meet at the stairs leading ta the Restaurant at the Racecourse.

APRIL DIARY

Sat 5	ASF Birdwalks & NRF walk
Fri 11	Kid's Birdwalk
Sat 12	Tree Walk at Arboretum
Sat 19	NRF walk
Sun 20	Sunday Birdwalk
Mon 28	Tree Walk

Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning

Bird ringing every Thursday Marning

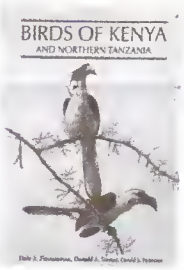
Bird Hotline
3749957

Short-toed Snake Eagle, Pel's Fishing Owl *Nairobi N.P./ Feb* Brian Finch

Little Ringed Plover, Spotted Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Greater Spotted Eagle *L Nakuru N.P./ Feb* Brian Finch, Itai Shanni

Shining Sunbird, *Samburu N. R/ Feb* Shailesh Patel, Erik Buchwald

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Nairobi N.P./ Mar* Bernd de Bruijn, Itai Shanni



Available at no charge, at the Nature Kenya front office, extra **covers** for hard back copies of *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania*

Please arrange collection

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya daes nat accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence af any of its staff, valunteers ar members arganising the autings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu

Calling for your Involvement!

Taking action for conservation, can be more effectively achieved from within the structured forum of a group; join the Youth Committee and put your ideas to work!

Youth Committee (YC) Meetings

The Youth Committee has its monthly meetings every first Friday of the month i.e. the next meeting will be held on **Friday 4 April 03, 2:00 p.m. at the Nature Kenya office.** YC has no age-limits!

Other Nature Kenya committees and projects

- *Friends of Nairobi Arboretum*
- *Friends of City Park*
- *Biodiversity Parks project*
- *Bird Committee*
- *Insect Committee*
- *Mammal Committee*
- *Plant Committee*
- *Succulenta East Africa*
- *Habitat Restoration Initiative for Eastern Africa*
- *Environmental Legislation and Policy Working Group*
- *Kenya Herpetofauna Working Group*

CLASSIFIEDS

EASTER CONCERT

Nairobi Music Society Choir, singing spirituals and works by Mozart

Saturday 12 April 7:30 pm and Sunday 13 April 3 pm, All Saints Cathedral.

Admission
Ksh 300, students Ksh 50

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For further information call
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